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Title Page

Three of the most original poets lately to add their voices to American literature come from the same local publisher, Ouija Madness Press (P.O. Box 25A59, Los Angeles 90025). Richard Meltzer, ex-Vom vocalist and present roving reporter for the L.A. Reader, releases "good verse and bad" from his "golden decade (1968-1983)." His **17 Insects Can Die in Your Heart** ($4.50, paperback) is crass, primitive, charming, ingenuous and calculating, getting closer to the truth of today than anybody else wants to be. From the same address comes **Some of Us** ($3, paperback) by Kim Rosenfield, L.A.'s 17-year-old *wunderkind*, a cool marvel we're bound to hear more of and bound at that time to say more about; and **Closer to Jesus** ($3.50, paperback) by Ouija Madness editor David Smith, an incredible first book reviewed last week by Holly Prado. —KENNETH FUNSTEN

Next time you're huddled around a campfire you'll wish you'd read **Southern Fried Rat and Other Gruesome Tales** by Daniel Cohen (M. Evans: $9.95; illustrated). Those morbid, scary and silly stories we've been whispering since childhood are updated here as urban legends, part of our American folklore. Remember the weird baby sitter who did the unthinkable? Or the couple eating fast food in the car but—oops, since when do fried chickens have three-inch tails? The gal who tried to dry her hair in a microwave, the "missing" bride, ghostly hitchhiker and haunted houses are all here, dredging memories of slumber parties and honest-this-really-did-happen boasts. This will give you the creeps if there's a flicker of kid still in you. —KRISTIANA GREGORY

IMMEDIATE NATIONAL BESTSELLER

"Grand stuff.... Mailer remains the most talented writer we have just now."
—Peter S. Prescott, Newsweek

"Surpasses The Executioner's Song"
"There is...spiritual power in Mailer's fantasy...and there is a relevance to current reality in America that actually surpasses that of Mailer's largest previous achievement, *The Executioner's Song*."
—Harold Bloom, New York Review of Books

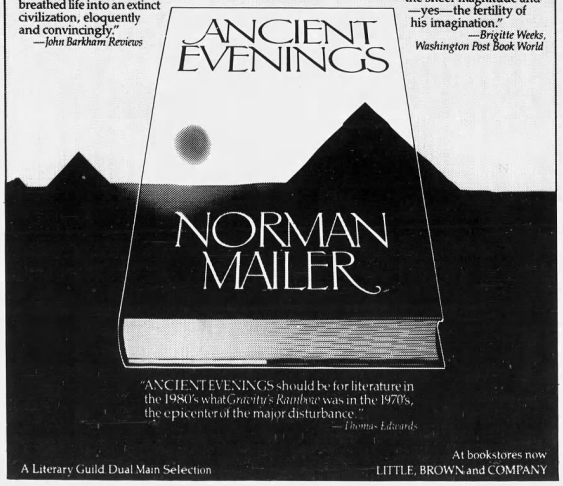
"A major novel of our time...."
a monumental work of the imagination....ANCIENT EVENINGS is an impressive performance even for so gifted a novelist as Norman Mailer. With the power of his imagination he has breathed life into an extinct civilization, eloquently and convincingly."
—John Barkham Reviews

"Pulses with life, richness, power and daring...."
Within this complex, often violent...story, the glory and the brutality of ancient Egypt unfolds. Mailer's portrait of Ramses II gives fascinating life to the stone images, and his accounts of the field and the palace are moving, fascinating and often uproariously funny."
—David Bradley, Philadelphia Inquirer

"Astounding, beautifully written."
—Robert Wilson, USA Today

"Sensuous, superbly written...."
A symphony of spirit and earth, of smoldering sex and slumbering tombs....Mailer enchants and transports across a gulf of centuries and civilizations, yet the fears and lusts he irradiates with his gifts are unchanged millennia later."
—Carol Eisen Rinzler, Cosmopolitan

"Haunting and magical"
"Mailer's Egypt is a haunting and magical place, primeval, mysterious. The reader wallows in the scope, depth, the sheer magnitude and —yes—the fertility of his imagination."
—Brigitte Weeks, Washington Post Book World



"ANCIENT EVENINGS should be for literature in the 1980's what *Gravity's Rainbow* was in the 1970's, the epicenter of the major disturbance."
—Thomas Edwards

A Literary Guild Dual Main Selection

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LITTLE, BROWN and COMPANY

Lonny Shavelson contacted those who seek love via classified advertisements for his **Personal Ads Portraits** (De Nova Press: $13.95, paperback, plus $1 shipping; available from P.O. Box 5106, Berkeley 94705) and laments the fact that "some of the stories of what happened just can't be told." It's a cinch that nothing much else is. The book's sparse text could scarcely shed less light on its protagonists. Not that many of them seem particularly likely prospects for intensive scrutiny, most being as unkinky as you or I. A few of this self-published book's photographs—such as that of the "androgynous" (sic) couple "hunting [a] brawny male voluptuary," border on the Arbusian, but most of them serve only to prove that personal advertisers aren't particularly noteworthy camera subjects. —JOHN NED MENDELSSOHN

Philip K. Dick, edited by Joseph D. Olander and Martin H. Greenberg (Taplinger: $12.95, hardcover; $5.95, paperback). Ironies: Dick died abruptly last year just as his novel, "Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep," was being turned into the futuristic film "Blade Runner." His fascinating essay "Now Wait for This Year" tells how he went through tough times, living on horse meat, so that he could continue his prolific-but-unprofitable output of science-fiction novels and stories. This volume from the "Writers of the 21st Century Series" contains 10 critical essays (in addition to the one by Dick) by prominent science-fiction writers such as Brian Aldiss, Darko Suvin, Thomas Disch and Peter Fitting. A thoughtful and provocative examination of an important American writer. —CHRIS WALL

Mr. Bliss by J.R.R. Tolkien (Houghton Mifflin: $11.95; illustrated); **Finn and Hengest: The Fragment and the Episode** by J.R.R. Tolkien (Houghton Mifflin: $15.95) and **The Road to Middle-Earth** by T. A. Shippey (Houghton Mifflin: $15.95). Tolkien apparently dashed off "Mr. Bliss" 50 years ago to amuse his children, then wisely forgot it. The story of an odd man purchasing his first car, it is a badly structured bagatelle, peopled with unsympathetic, uninteresting characters. "Finn and Hengest" combines three Tolkien lectures on two fragments of an arcane Anglo-Saxon poem. This learned textual exegesis will quickly lose average readers in scholarly examinations of words in Old Norse and Middle High German. "The Road to Middle-Earth" purports to show how Tolkien's fiction and poetry "grew from the rich soil of philology," but Shippey devotes most attention to knocking down straw men he has erected, quoting out of context, and obscuring more than he illuminates. —CHARLES SOLOMON

St. Peter's Banker: Michele Sindona by Luigi DiFonzo (Franklin Watts: $15.95) is an intriguing investigation into the tragic life of international banker Michele Sindona, who during his egotistical fight for power dealt every day with millions of dollars as if it were monopoly money. In chapters on Sindona's relations with the Vatican during the reign of Pope Paul VI (1963-1978), the results of DiFonzo's research are startling. The intrigue starts when the Vatican, which DiFonzo calls "the largest stockholder in the world," placed all its money in the hands of a person who had direct ties with the Mafia. "St. Peter's Banker" explains what it must be like for criminals of the banking world who play games with large sums of money but learn that it is dangerous when the rules are being made by the "honored society." —BOB PHILLIPS

"When throughout the ages had a Pope shared his throne with a woman?" **La Popessa** by Paul I. Murphy with R. Rene Arlington (Warner Books: $16.50) is the story of Pius XII and his alleged celibate lover, Sister Pascalina. She is the only woman in Vatican history to have lived in the papal quarters, witnessed a papal election and served a Vatican secretary of state, the book says. Pascalina

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